

Message Text

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SUBJECT: TEXT OF INTERVIEW WITH GUMERSINDO RODRIGUEZ

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF INTERVIEW WITH GUMERSINDO RODRIGUEZ, MINISTER FOR STATE PLANNING, AS PUBLISHED MARCH 30 ON FRONT PAGE OF CARACAS ENGLISH LANGUAGE DAILY JOURNAL: QUOTE INTENT ON AVOIDING A RIFT WITH THE REST OF LATIN AMERICA OVER THE HIGH PRICE OF OIL AT THE UPCOMING VUNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON RAW MATERIALS, THE VENEZUELAN GOVERNMENT IS ATTEMPTING TO PUT TOGETHER A COMMON LATIN AMERICAN POSITION ON RAW MATERIALS AND THE SOARING COSTS OF GOODS AND SERVICES.

"DR. GUMERSINDO RODRIGUEZ, CHIEF OF CORDIPLAN, THE EXECUTIVE PLANNING OFFICE, EMPHASIZED YESTERDAY THE VENEZUELAN GOVERNMENT'S INTEREST IN MELDING THE POINTS OF VIEW OF ALL THE LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES, "INCLUDING THOSE WHICH FOR REASONS EVERYBODY KNOWS PRESENTLY ARE UNCLASSIFIED

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OUTSIDE OF THE INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM," INTO A COMMON

FRONT.

"ADMITTING THAT HE HAD BEEN EUPHEMISTICALLY REFERRING TO CUBA, RODRIGUEZ SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT "IS AWARE OF THE INTEREST OF THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA IN PARTICIPATING IN THE DEFENSE OF THE PRICES OF RAW MATERIALS."

"RODRIGUEZ NOTED THAT CUBA, WHICH CURRENTLY SELLS MOST OF ITS SUGAR TO THE SOVIET BLOC, MAY BE INTERESTED IN MAINTAINING THE PRICES BEING OFFERED ON THE INTERNATIONAL MARKET.

"THE PLANNING MINISTER DECLINED TO COMMENT ON WHETHER THE TWO GOVERNMENTS HAD BEEN IN DIRECT CONTACT, AS SOME REPORTS HERE AFFIRM, SAYING ONLY THAT THE VENEZUELAN GOVERNMENT UNDERSTANDS THAT "CUBA COULD BE RECEPTIVE TO A VENEZUELAN INITIATIVE" IN DEFENSE OF HIGHER PRICES FOR RAW MATERIALS.

"RODRIGUEZ CONTENDED THAT "THE GREAT MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS AND THE STATES THAT ARE COMMITTED TO DEFEND THEIR INTERESTS, COULD, AT A GIVEN MOMENT, TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE ENERGY CRISIS TO UNITE THE COUNTRIES THAT HAVE TO PAY A HIGH PRICE FOR OIL AGAINST THE OIL PRODUCING COUNTRIES."

"HE CONCEDED THAT IF THE OIL CONSUMING COUNTRIES OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE REST OF THE THIRD WORLD DID ALIGN THEMSELVES AGAINST THE OIL PRODUCING COUNTRIES, "IT COULD PUT US IN A VERY DIFFICULT POSITION."

"A COHERENT LATIN AMERICAN POSITION ON MAINTAINING THE PRESENT OIL PRICES AND SECURING INCREASES IN THE PRICES OF OTHER RAW MATERIALS, RODRIGUEZ MAINTAINED, IS NEEDED TO PREVENT THE PURCHASING POWER OF THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES FROM ERODING BY THE EFFECTS OF RISING PRICES OF GOODS AND SERVICES.

"THE PROBLEM IS NOT THAT WE SHOULD SELL OUR OIL CHEAPER TO OTHER LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES,"
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RODRIGUEZ STRESSED, "BUT THAT WE SHOULD GET A BETTER PRICE FOR THEIR RAW MATERIALS AS WELL."

"TWO OTHER OBJECTIVES OF THE VENEZUELAN INITIATIVE, ACCORDING TO RODRIGUEZ, IS TO PRESS THE INDUSTRIALIZED NATIONS TO CONTROL THE RISING COST OF GOODS AND SERVICES AND TO CHANNEL INVESTMENTS INTO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES.

"RODRIGUEZ MADE IT CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT IT HAS NO INTENTION OF INDULGING THE DEVELOPING NATIONS WITH "EASY PHILANTHROPIES."

"RATHER, HE CALLED FOR A "COMMON ENTERPRISE", IN WHICH VENEZUELAN FUNDS WOULD BE INVESTED INTO SOUND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN LATIN AMERICA, WHICH WOULD ALLOW THOSE COUNTRIES TO EXPLOIT THEIR OWN RESOURCES, INSTEAD OF SELLING THEM AT UNDERVALUED RATES.

"VENEZUELA, FOR ITS PART, WOULD RECEIVE A SOLID RETURN ON ITS INVESTMENT, RODRIGUEZ SAID. UNQUOTE. MCCLINTOCK

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